

came to the table and supported legislation to protect veterans programs. I hope we could get some cooperation from our colleagues on the other side to do that today, I say to my colleague from Texas.

Mr. CORNYN. May I ask how much time remains?

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Three minutes.

Mr. CORNYN. I thank the Senators from South Dakota and from Missouri for making very important points. I know the leaders—bicameral leadership of the House and the Senate—were called to the White House last night, at which time Senator MCCONNELL, the distinguished Republican leader, reported here on the floor, the President announced he was not going to negotiate. Bizarre. Why would the President call the Republican and the Democratic leadership to the White House to say: I am not going to negotiate. Is it for a photo opportunity? Is it to give sort of some false impression that he is actually rolling up his sleeves and is engaged in the business of government to which he was elected?

I hope the President reconsiders leaving town while the government is shut down, in the words of the majority leader, and leaving for a trip to Asia while, as our distinguished Democratic colleagues just pointed out, many federal employees are furloughed during this government shutdown. My hope would be that the President would cancel his trip and that he would stay here in Washington, as we are, trying to solve this problem and break this impasse.

These proposals we have made here today, many of which have been voted on by the House of Representatives in a bipartisan fashion, are designed to do exactly that—to break this impasse. Yet what is the response of the White House to some earlier proposals? They sent out a Statement of Administration Policy saying: If it is passed, I would veto it. That is President Barack Obama. How is that rolling up your sleeves and being engaged in the job you got elected to? He earned it. He was elected twice as President of the United States. But it is not leadership to convene a meeting of Republican and Democratic leadership at the White House and say: I am not going to negotiate. And by the way, I am leaving town on Saturday. Good luck.

That leads me to conclude that the President and his party are actually enjoying this shutdown because they see this as partisan political gain. They read the public opinion polls, just as we do, but I do not think the American people should be fooled and they are not being fooled. House Republicans and Republicans in the Senate have made many reasonable proposals, only to be given the Heisman, and the President is not negotiating and the government remains shut down.

The President needs to stay here, demonstrate leadership, continue to meet with leaders on both sides of the

Capitol, and we can break through this impasse, get the money for children's cancer research, get the money for the troops, and open the World War II Memorial to the Honor Flights coming from Texas and around the country. We can do this. They call it self-government for a reason. We all ought to be working together toward that end.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican time has expired.

IRAQI SPECIAL IMMIGRANT VISA PROGRAM

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, having received from the House H.R. 3233, which is identical to S. 1566, the bill is considered read three times and passed. The motion to reconsider is considered made and laid on the table.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The assistant majority leader.

CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, there are two sides to every story. Before he leaves the floor, I would like to say to my friend from Texas—and he is my friend—I was at the World War II Memorial yesterday with an Honor Flight from Illinois. There were no barricades stopping them from going to the memorial, so the characterization on the floor that the veterans were stopped is not true, it is not accurate. I hope the record will reflect that.

The reason there is any question about access relates to the shutdown of the U.S. Federal Government, the shutdown of this government. We have passed a continuing resolution, which is a spending bill, to allow the government to function for 6 weeks. We passed it here in the Senate. The House Speaker, Mr. BOEHNER, refuses to call it for a vote.

There is a majority, Democratic and Republican, ready to vote for it, ready to reopen the government, no questions asked about the NIH, about the barricades at the World War II Memorial which were there originally. All these questions will be resolved. Three times this morning the Republicans have objected to bringing that measure up for another vote in the Senate. That worries me.

Let me say one other thing about the Affordable Care Act, the insurance exchanges. This morning—I am sorry he has left the floor—this morning, this is what the Republican leader, Mr. MCCONNELL, said about the insurance exchanges:

Embarrassing, embarrassing rollout over ObamaCare exchanges on Tuesday. I mean, one of the folks the President had standing behind him at the White House tried to log on and sign on to ObamaCare, and after a couple of unsuccessful attempts, the Post reports, she gave up.

I have good news for the Senator from Kentucky. When you look across the United States of America at the exchanges that have been opened, he

should hold as a matter of pride the fact that the Commonwealth of Kentucky is one of the most successful insurance exchanges in America. Listen to the report we just received this morning from the secretary of the Governor's Cabinet for Health, Audrey Haynes, in Kentucky. The Kentucky insurance exchange, which the Republicans want to close down, has had 117,000 unique visitors, 109,000 prescreenings to determine qualifications for health insurance, and 13,000 Kentuckians—already, in 2 days—already 13,000 have applied for health coverage and 8,000 are now complete.

This is great news. They are leading the country. Kentucky should be so proud. Mr. President, 122 small businesses have begun applications, 3,500 new families have been enrolled, and there have been 15,000 calls to the call center.

Apologize that we have not been able to process these as quickly in any State, but the overwhelming positive public response across America to what they call ObamaCare is an indication of pent-up demand in Kentucky, Illinois, and every State for people to finally get access to health insurance.

I see others are on the floor to speak. I want to say to my friends on the other side of the aisle, please reopen this government. We can sit down and negotiate—we should—about important issues, the issues the Senator from Washington addressed in the budget. Let's address all these issues. Let's do it in a bipartisan, thoughtful, adult manner. Telling 800,000 Federal employees to go home is really unfair to them. It is unfair to this Nation. It doesn't speak well of us.

The last point I will make is this. I left the Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearing this morning. Wendy Sherman is Assistant Secretary of State. She is widely respected. We were talking about the threat of Iran as a nuclear power. She said to us—and she said it with some regret—that the government shutdown is hurting our efforts to stop the development of nuclear weapons in Iran. How? Ninety percent of the employees at the Department of Treasury office responsible for monitoring Iran so that the sanctions are there and tough and bring them to the bargaining table—90 percent of those Federal employees have been furloughed at the Department of Treasury because the government shut down; and 72 percent—almost three-fourths—of all the men and women at our intelligence agencies in a civilian capacity have been laid off as well because of the government shutdown. These are men and women charged with watching the enemy every minute of every day so we never have another 9/11. This is one of the aspects of the government shutdown that literally jeopardize the security of the United States of America.

For goodness' sake, let's put this government back in business before the end of this day.